

author on an island off King Sound, near Derby, in September, 1955.

Because of a report to Mr. L. Glauert, Director, Western Australian Museum, by Mr. L. McMillan, of the Wotjulum Mission, that aborigines had seen large light-coloured bats in the Wotjulum region, the author decided to investigate caves in the area while on a collecting trip there. In company with an aborigine kindly placed at his disposal by the Mission authorities he went by dugout canoe to the bat-inhabited island.

The island's shores consisted of large slate-coloured cliffs with a narrow ledge at the base; and the caves could better be described as vertical cracks. Numerous bats were seen wedged in tiny cracks, but all appeared to be Free-tailed Bats (*Taphozous georgianus* Thomas) with occasional Little Bats (*Vespadelus pumilus* (Gray)). The caves were inhabited by many vicious small ants (*Iridomyrmex* sp.) and large numbers of a silverfish (*Machilis* sp.). After searching four caves without seeing a Ghost Bat among the many bats present, a further examination was made of the largest cave. A shot was fired at a couple of bats wedged in a crevice high up. One squeaked and as it fell a large white bat flew to the wounded one clinging to the wall in the same manner as I have seen butcher-birds (*Craicticus*) tackle birds I have shot. The large bat was collected and proved to be a male Ghost Bat.

The ventral surface of the specimen (W.A. Museum No. M3076) was white and it had dove grey fur on upper surfaces. The white colour can be compared with the delicate shade of white butterflies of the family Pieridae. All bare flesh was pink and the eyes were brown. Measurements of the specimen were as follows:—Head and body length, 120 mm.; ear, 52; forearm, 113; pes, 26. Dimensions of skull: length, 38.5 mm.; breadth, 24.3; inter-orbital constriction, 4; palate, 13.

The Ghost Bat apparently does not occur in numbers, as only three were seen and each appeared to be the only one present in the cave. It is possible that the bat does not leave the cave under normal conditions. It also seems possible that the smaller bats are wedged deeply into crevices to escape the attacks of the Ghost Bat. Little information on the animal could be obtained from the aborigines and none could supply a name for it.

—A. M. DOUGLAS, W.A. Museum, Perth.

**Grey Butcher-bird (*Craicticus torquatus*), is it cannibalistic?—**On "Yanjettee" every year there appears to be a high mortality among eggs and nestlings of Butcher-birds and also of Magpies (*Gymnorhina dorsalis*). Some of this may be caused by my presence at the nests, disturbing the birds and setting up conflict emotions (see E. A. Armstrong, *Bird Display and Behaviour*, 1947, pp. 34-36). However, in 1955 I recorded an incident which suggests the possibility of cannibalism in Butcher-birds. During that year I found eight nests on "Yanjettee." The history of these may be summarised as follows:—

- No. 1, Sept. 9, 4 eggs. Oct. 10, 4 young. Nov. 11, young had left nest but were in trees close by.  
 No. 2, Sept. 9, 1 egg. Oct. 13, 2 eggs, 1 young. Nov. 2, 1 live and 1 dead young in nest.  
 No. 3, Oct. 4, 3 eggs. Oct. 14, 3 eggs. Oct. 25, 1 egg, 2 young. Nov. 2, 2 young. Nov. 6, 1 young. Nov. 9, no young.  
 No. 4, Sept. 1, 3 eggs. Oct. 10, 1 egg, 2 young. Oct. 25, 3 young. Nov. 2, 3 young.  
 No. 5, Sept. 13, 1 egg. Sept. 15, 2 eggs. Sept. 17, 3 eggs. Oct. 9, 3 young. Oct. 20, 3 young. Nov. 2, flown.  
 No. 6, Oct. 10, 3 young. Nov. 2, young flown. Nov. 7, 3 young birds seen in area.  
 No. 7, Sept. 19, 4 eggs. Oct. 6, 4 young. Oct. 20, 1 young. Oct. 27, 1 young.  
 No. 8, Nov. 2, young—high nest, not inspected.

It will be seen from these records that of seven nests containing a total of 23 eggs, only a maximum of 15 young birds (65%) could have left. On October 20, when I visited nest No. 7, three of the four young birds had disappeared. One of these (?) was found hanging in a fork two feet from the ground, and 30 yards from the nest. Its entrails were hanging out, but there was no sign of any flesh having been removed. From my experience in northern and south-western Australia of the Grey Butcher-bird this method of dealing with its victim is typical of the species (see also E. H. Sedgwick, *Emu*, vol. 47, 1947, p. 68, and Serventy and Whittell, *Handbook of the Birds of W.A.*, 1951, p. 360). As far as I know this technique is not used by any other species in this area. Cracks in timber are often utilised, but the principle is the same—the victim is hung by the neck and the flesh is torn from the body while it is usually held by the head. However, I have never seen a "viee" so close to the ground before. In this instance the young bird must have been removed from the nest but whether it was dead or alive at the time of removal I do not know. It had, apparently, been dead for a few days when I found it, as the surviving bird in the nest was much more advanced. I visited the nest again on October 27 and found that the young bird hung in the fork had disappeared.

—ANGUS ROBINSON, "Yanjettee," Coolup.

**Unusual Bird Records in 1955.**—During 1955 a number of interesting observations were made, all but one being in the Swan River district. These are set out below.

March 30. Two Royal Spoonbills (*Platalea leucorodia*) were seen feeding with 7 White Egrets (*Egretta alba*) on the sapphire flats at the eastern end of the Perth Causeway.

June 2. A Diamond Dove (*Geopelia cuneata*) was seen at Butler's Swamp, Claremont. The white wing spots and red around its eye were clearly evident. Though this northern species in its occasional wanderings south has been reported from various parts of the South-West, this is the first record from the Swan River district.

July 2. A party of 16 Dusky Woodswallows (*Artamus cyanopterus*) was seen at the northern end of Lake Coolclal on the Yanchep road.

July 31. A Restless Flycatcher (*Seisura inquieta*) was noted in flight by the edge of the Great Northern Highway 2 miles north